

Prevent

We wanted to share information about a new Government strategy called 'Prevent'. From July 2015 all schools have a duty to keep children safe from radicalisation and extremism.

This means we have a responsibility to protect children from extremist and violent views the same way we protect them from drugs or gang violence. Importantly, we can provide a safe place for pupils to discuss these issues so they better understand how to protect themselves.

All staff and some Governors have undertaken the WRAP training led by the Schools Equalities co-ordinator – Gill Finch in January 2016.

What does this mean in practice?

Many of the things we already do in school to help children become positive, happy members of society also contribute to the Prevent strategy.

These include:

- Exploring other cultures and religions and promoting diversity
- Challenging prejudices and racist comments
- Developing critical thinking skills and a strong, positive self-identity
- Promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, as well as British values such as democracy.

We will also protect children from the risk of radicalisation, for example by using filters on the internet to make sure they can't access extremist and terrorist material, or by vetting visitors who come into school to work with pupils.

Different schools will carry out the Prevent duty in different ways, depending on the age of the children and the needs of the community.

How does Prevent relate to British values?

Schools have been required to promote British values since 2014, and this will continue to be part of our response to the Prevent strategy.

British values include:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty and mutual respect
- Tolerance of different faiths and beliefs

Isn't my child too young to learn about extremism?

The Prevent strategy is not just about discussing extremism itself, which may not be appropriate for younger children. It is also about teaching children values such as tolerance and mutual respect.

The teachers at Bellingham First School will of course make sure any discussions are suitable for the age and maturity of the children involved.

Is extremism really a risk in our area?

Extremism can take many forms, including political, religious and gender extremism. Some of these may be a bigger threat in our area than others.

We will give children the skills to protect them from any extremist views they may encounter, now or later in their lives.